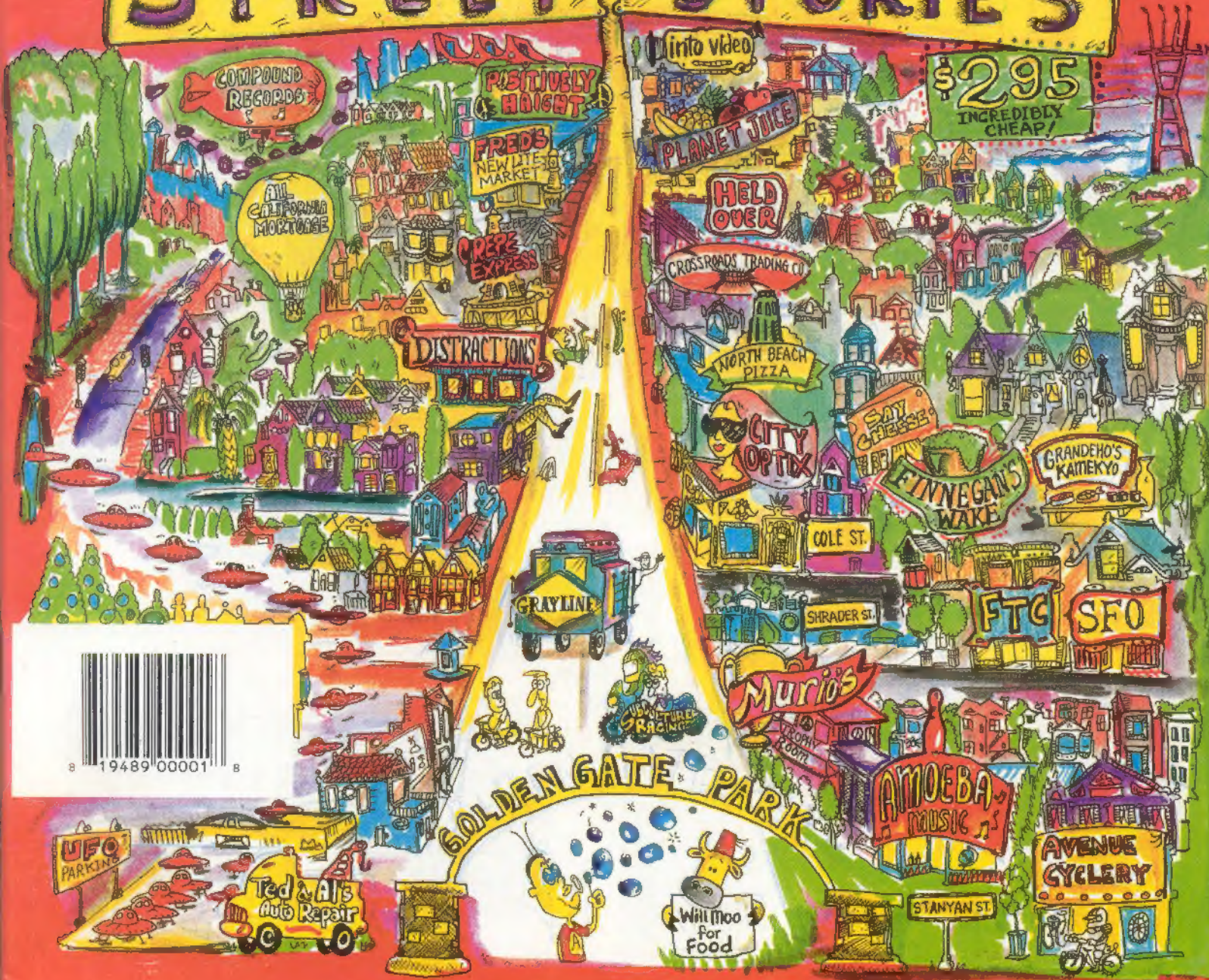




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# HAIGHT STREET STORIES • The Comic

Vol. 1 No. 1 published by STREETS of America APRIL 2001

## TABLE of CONTENTS

OUR LOVELY HEROINE treats herself,  
And boy, is she in for a surprise.  
"IN which Esther Gets a Tattoo"



STERLING BEER  
and Jalapeños



a Sunday afternoon  
drinking session  
and the morning  
after.

He's a creepy Christian kid  
with a plan.



# ARMAGEDDON Now

Haight Street Stories is Another Fungi Production, published by Streets of America. This comic book is available at each of the merchants advertising in this issue—while supplies last. Or you may purchase a copy by mail. Send \$5.00 (American) in check or MO (price includes postage and handling) to:

Streets of America, 3311 Mission Street,  
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Grateful acknowledgment and appreciation is extended to all our advertisers who had the foresight to believe in us and buy space in Haight Street Stories. Without them, this book would not exist. Please patronize these people. We are also indebted to our friends at Honeywell & Todd, Howard Quinn, to F.S. and to Michael Viapiana for helping produce this book.

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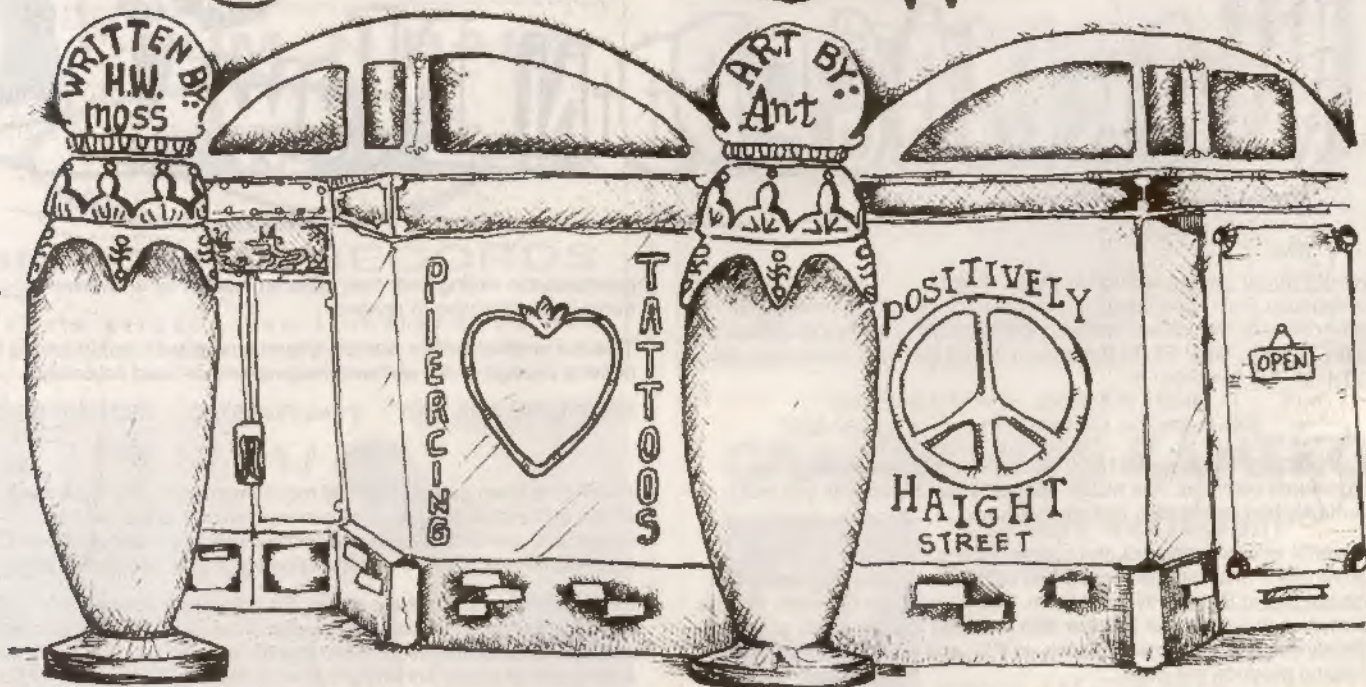
Read the original text of these stories, the manuscript versions, at [www.NetNovels.com](http://www.NetNovels.com) where you may also email us at [anyone@netnovels.com](mailto:anyone@netnovels.com). And look for us on the Net at [www.HaightStreet.com](http://www.HaightStreet.com). You may also view original caricatures by Ant simply by visiting Muir's Trophy Room at 1811 Haight Street and looking up at the ceiling, which is covered with them.

This book is dedicated to the memory of Joe Woods, 1969-2000, victim of an unsolved murder and proof that only the good die young.





in which ESTHER  
gets a Tattoo





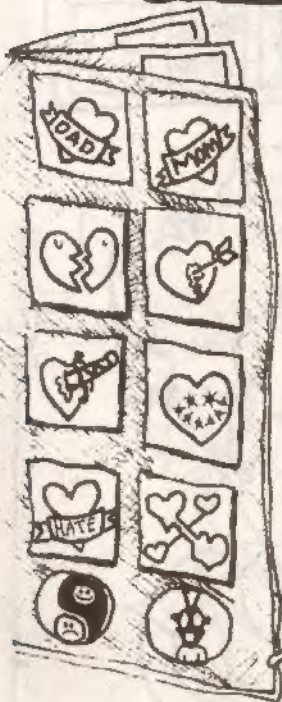


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OPEN

It took two weeks to make the decision to get one, but once her mind was made up Esther had to spend another full hour selecting the absolute best image to have inked on her skin. What she could not say, however, was why, exactly, she wanted a tattoo in the first place. Like having a tooth removed: it's forever.



Meaningful. Proclaims my individuality. Weren't Tattoo Tony and Tatoodles just oodles and oodles of fun? Didn't Janis have one? Mom would not like it. Sonny wants me to get one. A gift, my gift to Sonny. Besides, everyone else is getting them.







Does it hurt?  
Not really.  
Just a mosquito  
bite. But once you  
sit for one,  
you'll want another.

She did not  
understand  
why that was.



She stood in the confined  
waiting room of the tiny  
tattoo parlor on Haight Street  
and tried to decide on a  
design.



Ultimately she picked  
one out: the red lips from  
the Stones' Sticky Fingers  
album.



one of Sonny's  
favorite discs





ESTHER surprised herself with the firmness of her decision. She waltzed over to the shaggy-haired man with a ZZ Top beard standing behind the counter.



ZZ Top beard  
standing behind  
the counter.



"Lemme see the flash." He said reaching out a hand.

Her facial expression must have been one of total incomprehension because he immediately clarified his request: "What'd you pick out, lady?"

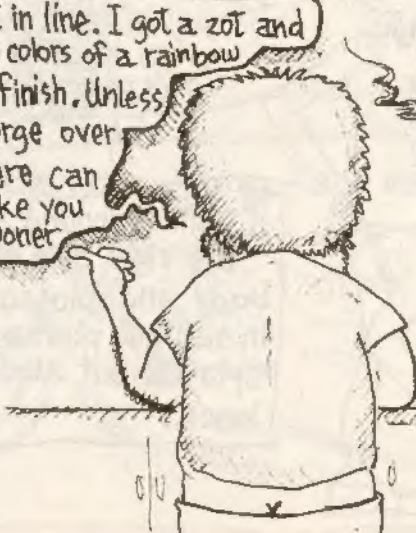
Polite, but condescending nonetheless.



That'll be sevenny-five, Lady...



Get in line. I got a zot and two colors of a rainbow to finish. Unless George over there can take you sooner.

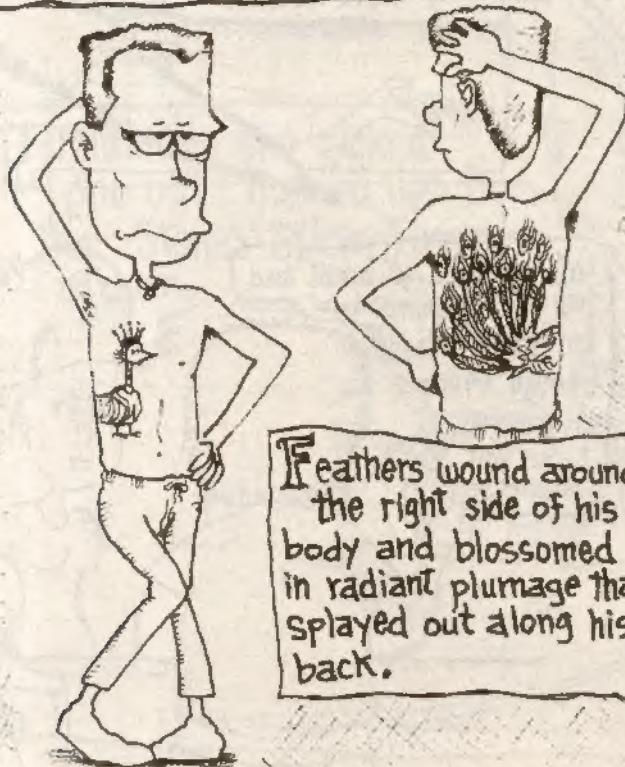




She approached a bench and sat down to wait patiently with four other people, three men and a woman. The men were in line before her, each clutching a piece of paper with art work on it. The woman was not in the queue. She wore an enigmatic expression and was holding her hand over a white bandage on her upper arm.



The oldest among the men could not be in his late thirties. Esther had noticed him when she first entered the shop. He was shirtless, his upper torso adorned with a colorful peacock.



Feathers wound around the right side of his body and blossomed in radiant plumage that splayed out along his back.

Esther admired the human canvas and caught herself staring.



the man sat alert to the bee-like whine of the electric needle bar busily at work in a booth across the room.



Everyone could clearly hear the buzz of drills and sometimes conversations in progress. She listened as one artist told an old joke about the woman who wanted ELVIS tattooed on the inside of her left thigh and Liberace on the inside of her right. He ended with:



I don't know who the other two fellas are, but that's definitely Willie Nelson in the middle.

The line moved and suddenly it was her turn. Her lot fell to the bearded man who'd taken her money. She followed him to a leather covered table upon which he indicated she should lie down.



"Where do you want this?"

"Ankle"

Number three on the list of most Popular places to be tattooed

He said as he nonchalantly twisted the foot in his hand and scrutinized the area in question

She still had just that smidgen of doubt but was able to force resolve into her voice when she added:



"Upside down."

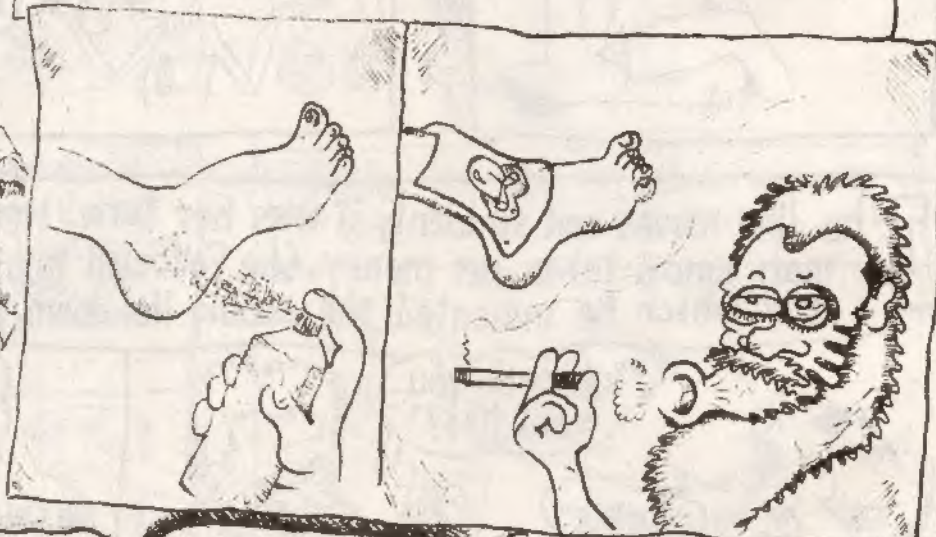
"That's a bit unusual. You sure about that?"

"OKAY. It's your body."





He leaned over, propped her foot up and cinched a strap over her calf to hold it in position. Then he swabbed the spot with alcohol before spraying it with an aerosol deodorant. Next, he placed the tracing paper on her skin, image side down, and sat back to light a cigarette.



"What colors do I have to choose from?"

"Hey, it's your choice, girl. I don't care if you want pink polka dots. Mostly, people get this in red and black, though."





Red & Black, she said nodding her head and biting back a growing concern.



He placed several ink pots on a silver tray in front of him, dipped the tip of the needle bar in one and pressed a button.....



She laid back as the device began its work



The initial touch on her white skin was delicate, a lover's lips nibbling, tickling....



Then the bit sank its fang deeper & deposited its first drops.

ESTHER felt a large, sharp hurt that ran all the way up her leg into her groin where it delivered a stunningly abusive blow that shook her entire body. It was a knife slash and a paper cut and a hammer hitting her

for one agonizing moment she felt as if someone had just slammed a bottle up or punched her in the stomach.

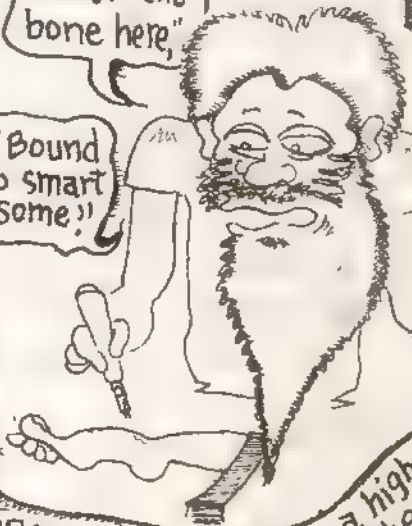


Every nerve in the leg began to scream for mercy as the needle continued its relentless work.

"over the bone here,"

"Bound to smart some,"

The artist observed casually as he stubbed the cigarette out with his free hand



Her suffering rose to a higher level than she had ever experienced. The punishment was grueling. A burning agony ran straight up her spine and seeped out of her every pore. The torture was unrelenting. It increased with every passing instant. The electric buzz in her ears became confused with a blinding white light that clouded her vision as hot pain consumed her.

"Virgin, huh? Be glad you're not getting a band. Anything an inch wide and I've to use a four-headed Liner."

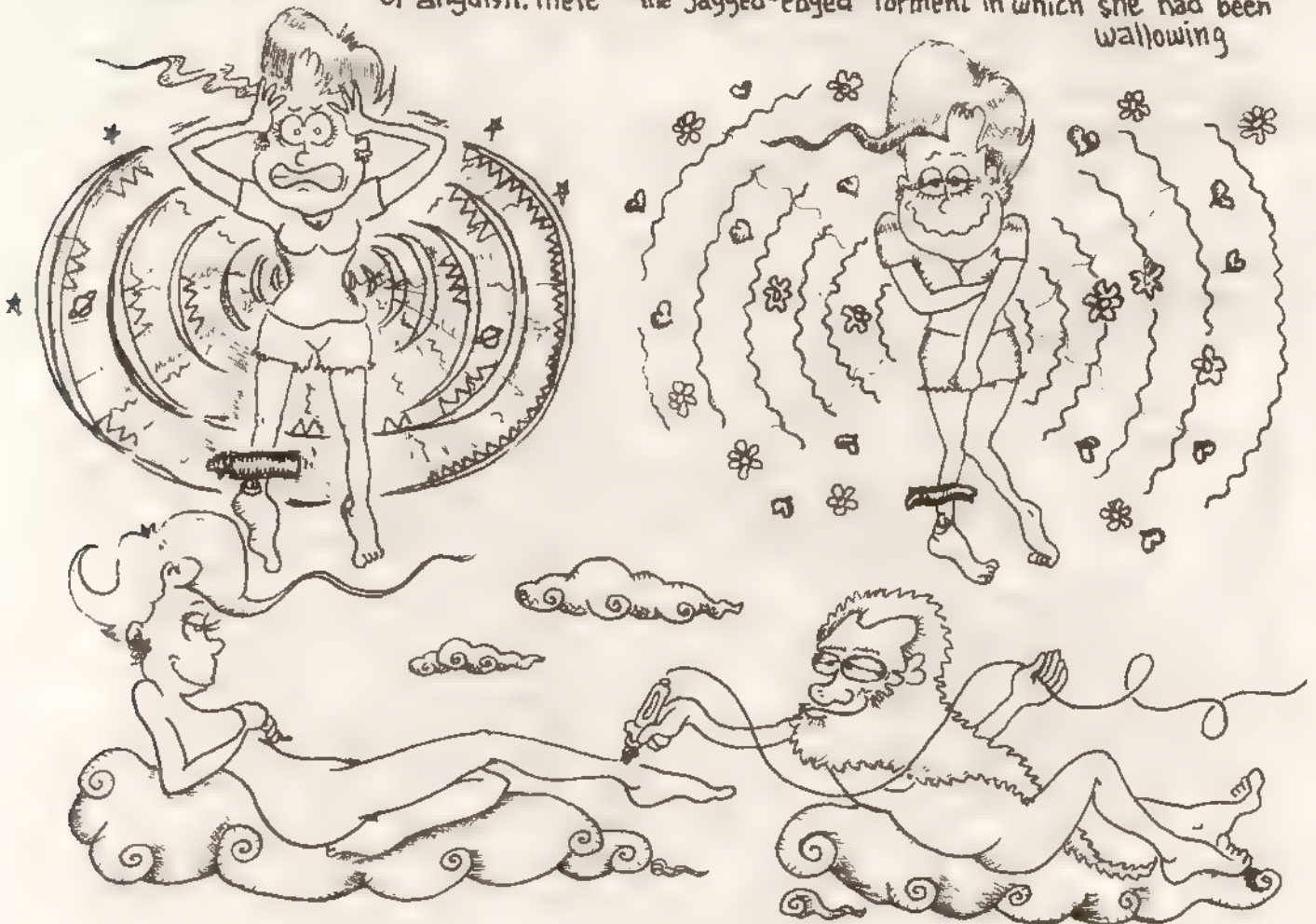






**D**read paid no attention to her plight as he continued his work. He stopped periodically to take a different or better angle but any respite for Esther was minor.

Time had no meaning for her as every second stretched into an eternity of anguish. There was no way for her to tell how long the pain lasted but there came a breathless moment when it disappeared entirely and she felt a glow of golden warmth replace the jagged-edged torment in which she had been wallowing.





IT BEGAN AT THE TOP OF HER HEAD, SOMEWHERE IN HER HAIR, SHE LATER TOLD SONNY and those of her friends who would listen to her detailed description of the experience.

Joyful release flowed down and outward to her fingertips, along her outstretched body like the initial splash of water as it comes out of a shower head and covers you all over with warmth she would say with a zealot's wide eyes and undiminished enthusiasm.



Then came a total deadening of pain that allowed the whirl of the needle as it worked its way under her skin to rise to the forefront of her mind.

She exulted in the senseless sound it made. She became exhilarated with a chaotic quiet she had not enjoyed since her first acid rush



and a beautiful smile upturned her lips.



"Wondered when those damn endorphins would kick in."

"That's it for the outline, darlin'. Now to get some color in that baby."



He dipped the needle in red ink, pressed the button and took aim. It did not occur to her the operation had only just begun.



THIS Time as the sound reached her ears she felt higher than she had ever felt on ecstasy and as excited as a child on Christmas morning. Her attitude changed from that of a cowering animal to a brazen daredevil. She felt exhilarated and capable of solving the world's problems. Bring on the Arabs, let's sit 'em down with the Israelis. Population explosion and food shortages? NOT a problem.



"This is gonna take a while, let's order some Chinese."





SHE found herself beyond pain, in a place

she had never before visited and nothing

Dread did could change that.

SHE propped herself up on her elbows to look down the long path to where her foot joined her leg and emitted a low growling noise like an animal in heat.

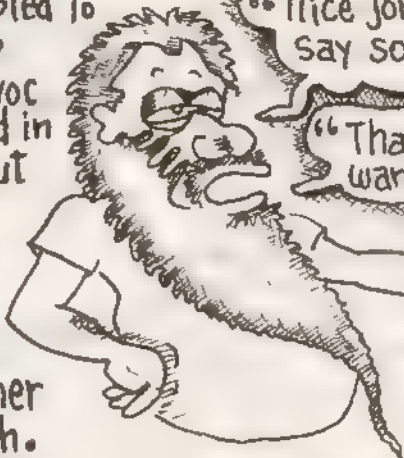
grrrr!

Several times during the course of his work he stopped briefly and swabbed blood away with a cotton ball. Occasionally he adjusted the bar's tension and numerous times to dip the needle.

Eventually, he turned the machine off entirely but by then Esther felt like asking him to continue.



She leaned forward and attempted to focus on the image irrevocably etched in her skin but the effort was muted by the lingering effects of her natural high.



"Nice job if I do say so myself"

"That what you wanted to see, honey?"



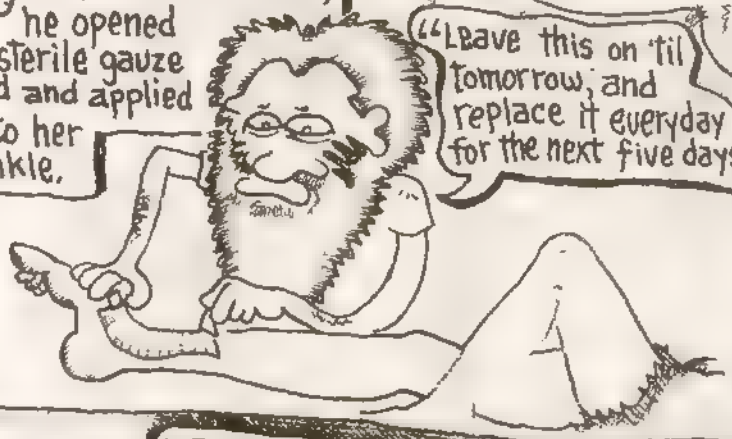
"Looky here. This is gonna sting"



Ol' doc Dread swabbed the completed tattoo with a new cotton ball soaked in a white anesthetic. It shocked her back to her senses and she jumped in response to its touch.



With practised hand, he opened a sterile gauze pad and applied it to her ankle.



"Leave this on 'til tomorrow, and replace it everyday for the next five days."

She felt woozy as she stood, but her legs held.

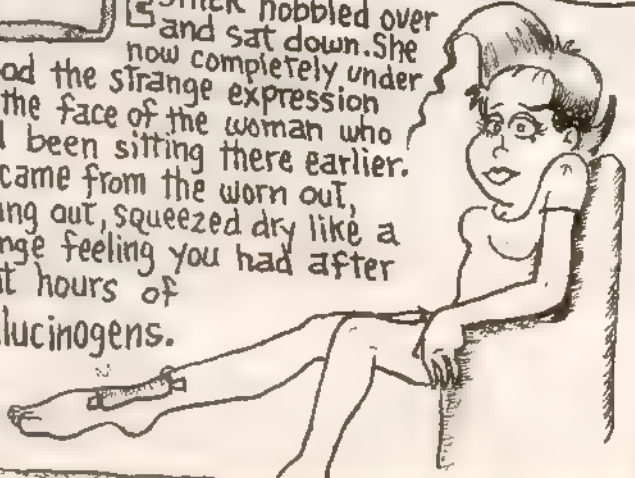


"You're all done now, deary. Here, lemme help you up."



"THERE Aint no recovery room. Not enough space in the shop. Why dont you just sit on that bench over there 'til you feel like walking. I got another job to do."

ESTHER hobbled over and sat down. She now completely understood the strange expression on the face of the woman who had been sitting there earlier. It came from the worn out, wrung out, squeezed dry like a sponge feeling you had after eight hours of hallucinogens.



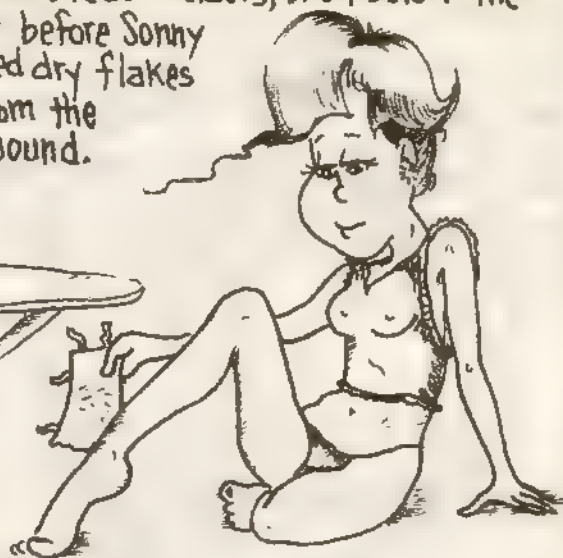
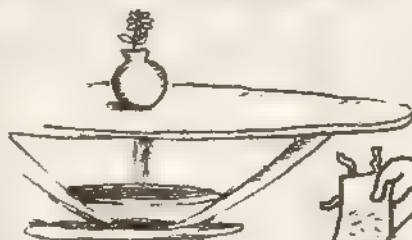


**B**UT her recovery was swift. In less than fifteen minutes,

Esther felt fit enough to return to the outside world.



**G**oing against Doc Dread's orders, she peeled the sterile pad off before Sonny got home and wiped dry flakes of blood away from the surface of the wound.



**W**hen she showed it to him after dinner, he hugged her and laughed about it being upside down.



**S**he smiled at his bemused inquiry...

"So I can admire it too, Silly boy."



**S**he didn't tell him she already intended to visit Doc Dread again next week, to work on the other leg. Nor that she was planning on a butterfly on her right shoulder. A peacock was a bit much, though. She would have to think about it. A floral arrangement. Now that was something to consider.

**end**





Jason



Billy

STARRING:

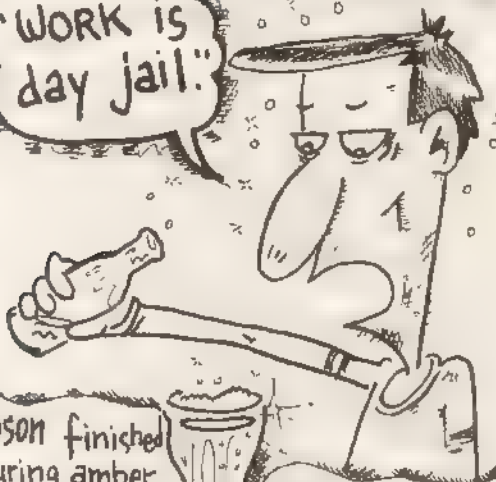
Two dot commies

# STERLING BEER and JALAPENOS

written by: H.W. Moss

art by: Ant

"WORK is  
day jail."



Jason finished  
pouring amber  
liquid into his  
glass. He sat  
back and eyed  
the rim to make  
sure it didn't spill.

He was prepared  
to sip from the  
lip if necessary,  
but the decant  
was accurate.

"Could'nt agree with you more,  
but I gotta go pollute the Bay."



Billy tilted the last  
drops of his tenth beer  
down his throat and slammed  
the bottle on the wood surface.





He boosted himself by his knuckles, not the palm of his hand, up from his tall seat. Standing was an effort, almost superhuman considering the amount of alcohol he had consumed.



He wobbled slightly, captured the restroom in his mind's eye and headed toward it leaning at a forward angle like a schooner attacking the wind.

Two hors d'oeuvres plates full of chicken bones surrounded by drizzled heaps of deep fried crumbs and a half dozen dead soldiers littered the counter in front of Jason.



Hum—...



He idly ran the tip of his index finger in a pattern around first one plate and then the other, a figure eight. He hummed quietly to himself and accumulated a greasy layer of scum under his nail.





★ MIDORI, Apple schnapz  
Pineapple Juice. served by Johnny only at Murio's Trophy Room



"Certainly hope you boys  
ain't driving,"

Johnny the  
bartender spoke  
from directly  
opposite Jason

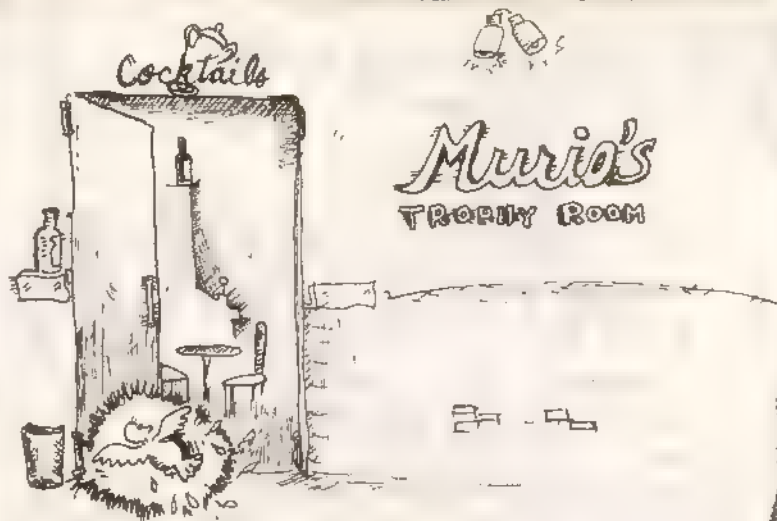


"JEEESUS KEERIST!  
Don't sneak up on me  
LIKE THAT!"



Jason almost jumped out of  
his skin.





Jason's high pitched voice frightened a pigeon and wings fluttered in the open doorway through which late Sunday afternoon sunlight filtered. There were no front windows facing Haight Street in Murio's Trophy Room.



Johnny was still sober and wore a stern no-nonsense expression. Jason recovered from his moment of fright.

"Course I'm drivin'. After all, I'm too drunk to walk."



"Five of this is yours if you get us two more brewskis and another plate of buffalo wings.... and make it 'spicy'."

Billy magically reappeared next to Jason and waved a \$20 bill under Johnny's nose.





Jason swiveled in his seat.  
He faced Billy with a squint  
in his eyes.



"The objective  
of work should  
be to quit."

"Could'nt agree with you more, bro.  
Puttin' in my time on that goddamn  
chain gang is how. I feel everyday  
in that goddamn  
sweat shop."



"That's what I like about you, Billy,  
You're so frank. It's refreshing to know  
someone who speaks his mind."



"Ahhh.  
The beers are here."



Billy's eyes lit up and his mouth  
went into an 'O' shape.



"Ooof. Did I really order these?"



Another plate lined with jalapeños was shoved under his nose.



He picked up a pepper in one hand, a buffalo wing in the other. He bit a large piece of the tip off the green vegetable, quickly chomped into the meat.



He dropped both back onto his plate, lunged at his beer and washed the mixture down with a long swallow.

Jason picked up a portion. He separated the greasy delicacy into two parts, placed the drumstick whole in his mouth and withdrew a clean bone.



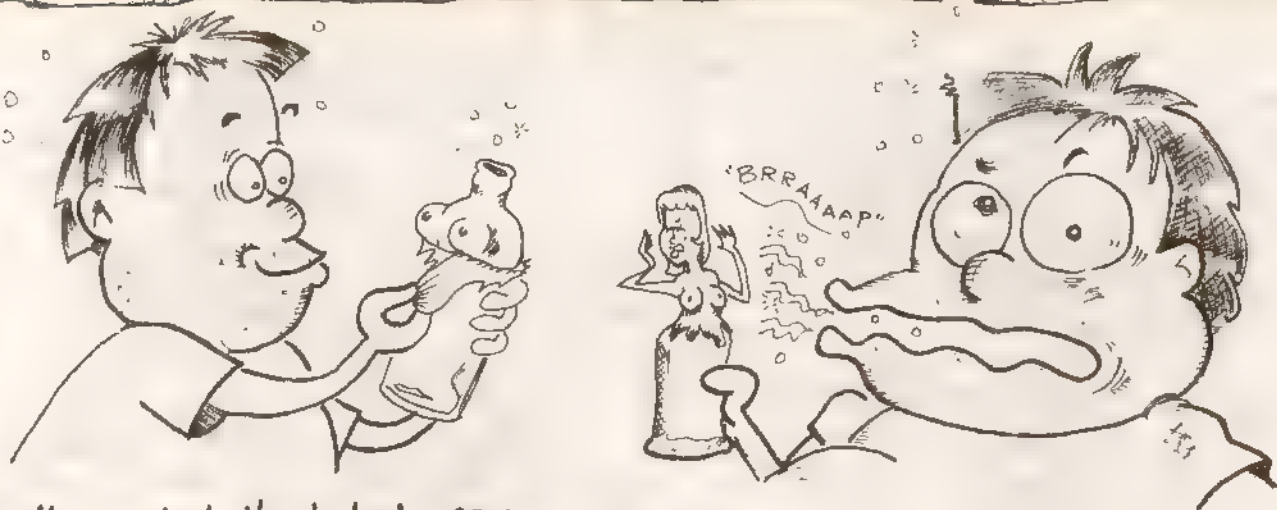
"NAW, naw. Just the gristle. Good for you. Cartilage replacement theory."



"You eating the bone too?"

"You'll never get arthritis."

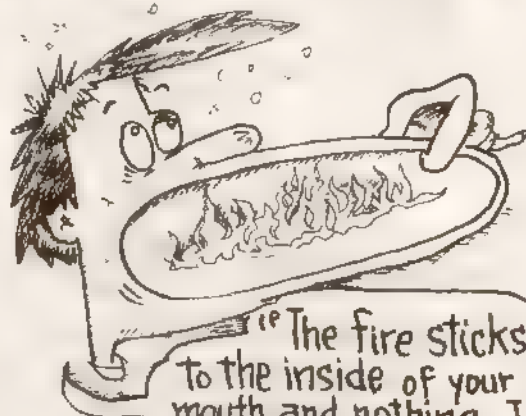




Billy peeled the label off his bottle until he had a small mound of colored paper lying on the counter. He belched loudly. They ate and drank in silence for a few moments.



"Jalapeños are nothing. Seranos are nothing. Thai chilis, they're moderately hot. But Habaneros, now that's one hot pepper."



"The fire sticks to the inside of your mouth and nothing, I mean nothing washes it away."

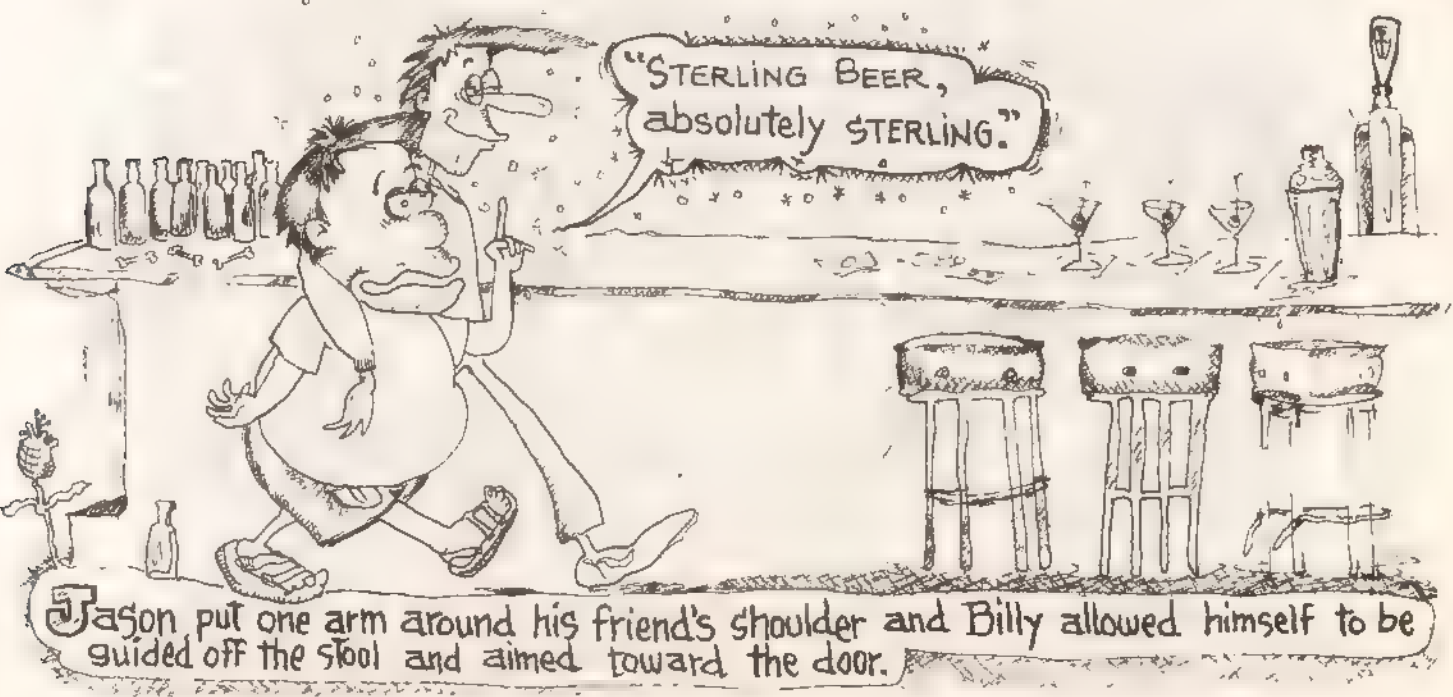
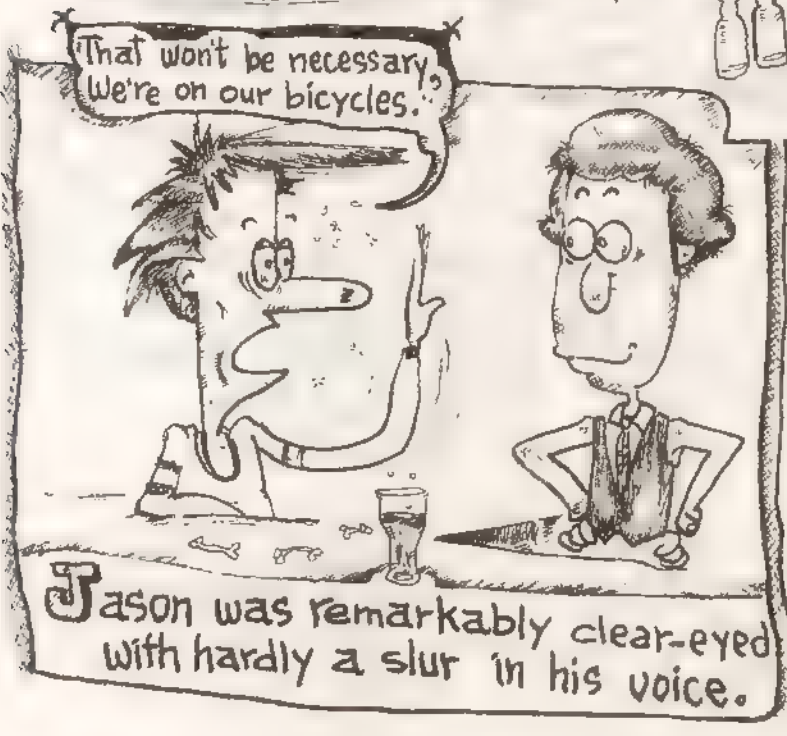


"Sounds like one of Joe's progress reports. Stays on your record for months, years even."

"You really ought to try and stay on his good side, y'know. After all, Joe is in charge of our project."











Billy fumbled out a key and unlocked the coupled bicycle frames.



The night air did wonders to sober them up as they pedaled toward their downtown condominiums.

Only blocks apart, they separated and each made his own way home.

It was in the elevator that Jason's stomach threatened revenge.

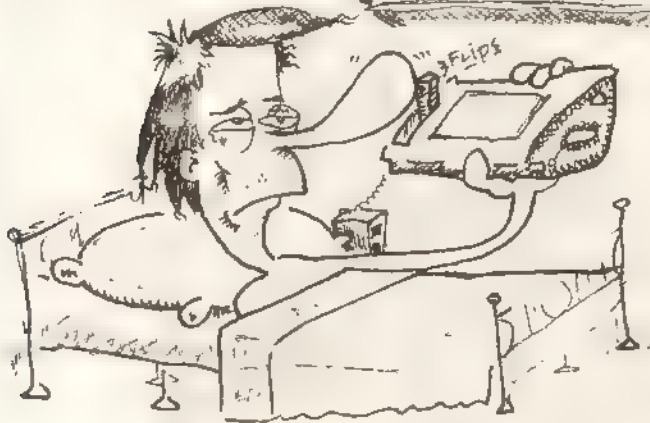


He managed to hold it down and splash water on his face, to undress and crawl into bed.





His last conscious thought was to flip the alarm clock switch into the 'on' position.



Around ten o'clock the next morning...



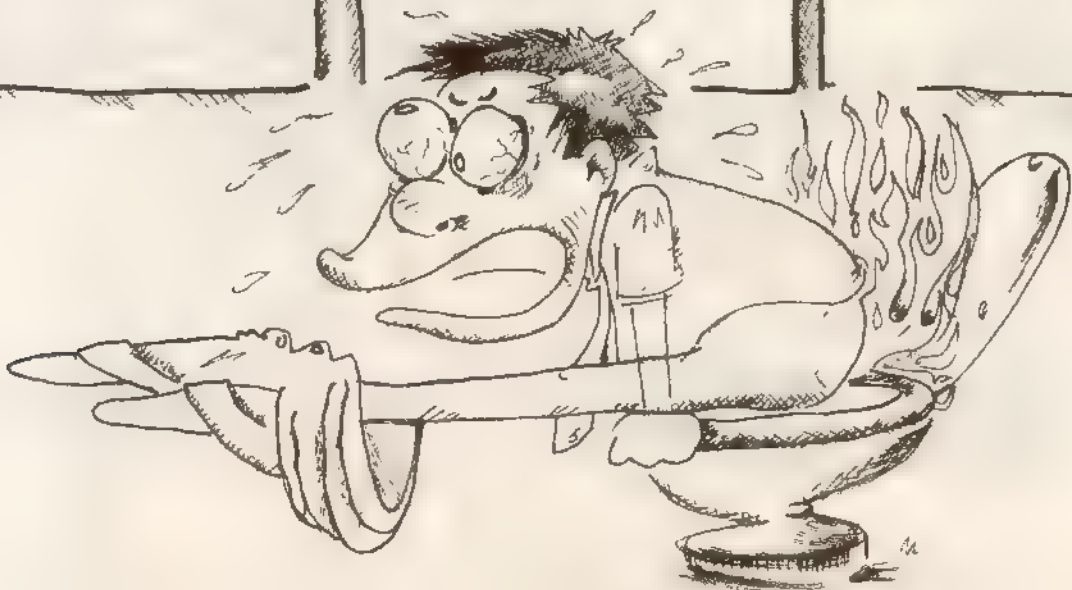
... Jason nursed an aching head with a cup of black coffee in the lunchroom of the highrise office complex.



Joe Wagoner was trying to explain the Woodacre deal but Jason did not have the patience to follow along.



Jason had not seen Billy and wondered if he had made it to work or called in sick.



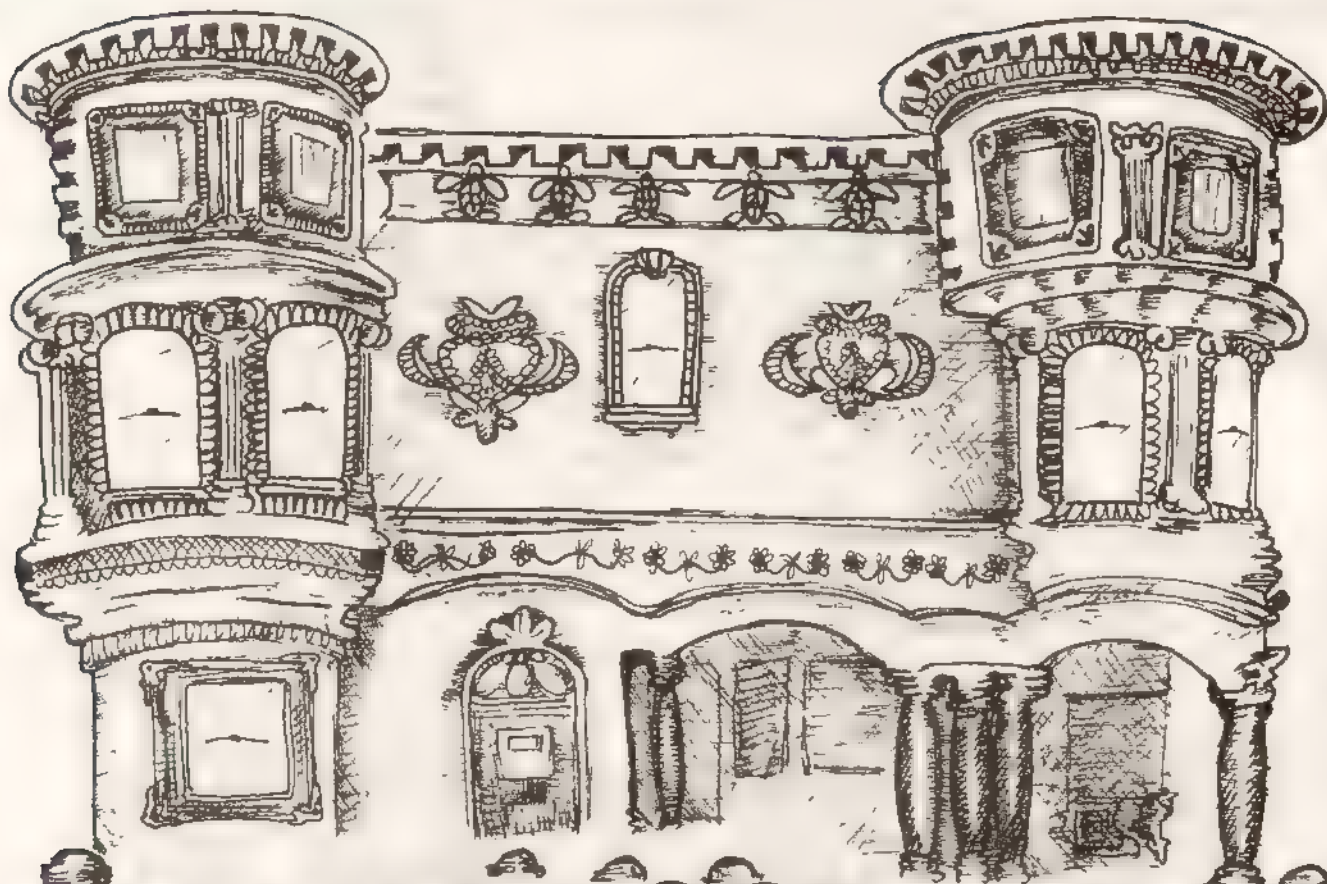
At that moment, Billy burst into the room. He spotted Jason and marched over.....



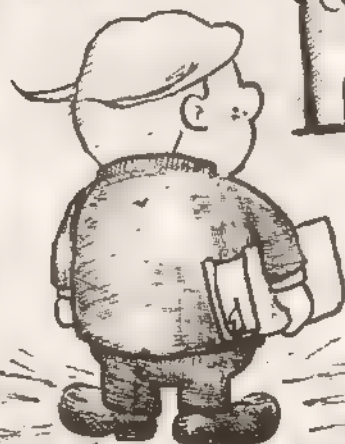
Without so much as a greeting or hello, he said:







# ARMAGEDDON NOW



Written by:  
H.W. Moss

Art by:  
'Ant'

**D**arlene had a scowl on her face as she dropped the curtain and stepped back from the casement of the livingroom window.



**E**mphasizing the term of endearment the way she did when she was piqued Darlene said:



**T**he sports section of the Sunday paper fell from in front of Gary's face as he exhaled a resigned sigh. He squirmed in his recliner chair.



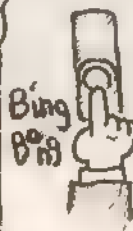
"Don't answer the door. Maybe he doesn't know we're here."



"Darlene, dear, of course he knows we're home. We just walked in from brunch. He probably hides out in the bushes until we drive up."



**THE DOORBELL CHIMED ONCE MORE.**



All right,

ALL Right,

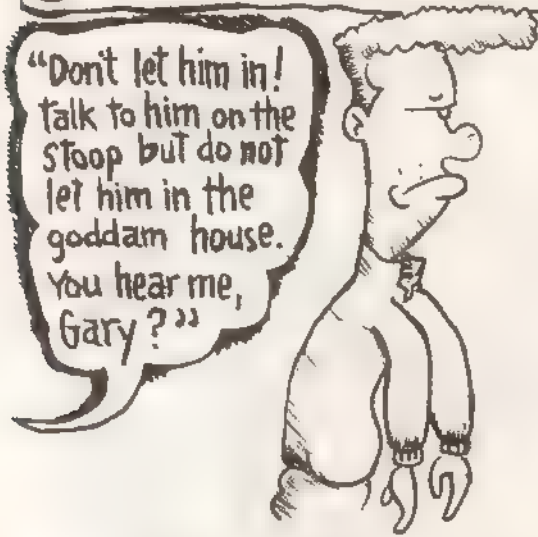
I'll handle it."





Gary heard Darlene calling out:

"Don't let him in!  
talk to him on the  
stoop but do not  
let him in the  
goddam house.  
You hear me,  
Gary?"



He cracked the Levolors, a dead giveaway to anyone on the other side they're being scrutinized. Gary recognized the small stern face staring up at him.



He pulled the door open. A child of seven wearing a white shirt and miniature black polyester suit and thin black tie stood on the porch. An incongruously large book dangled from his tiny right fist.



"ARMAGEDDON is imminent, Mithter Dierly. the final battle between good and evil is about to take place,"

...the familiar and occasionally lisping voice intoned.

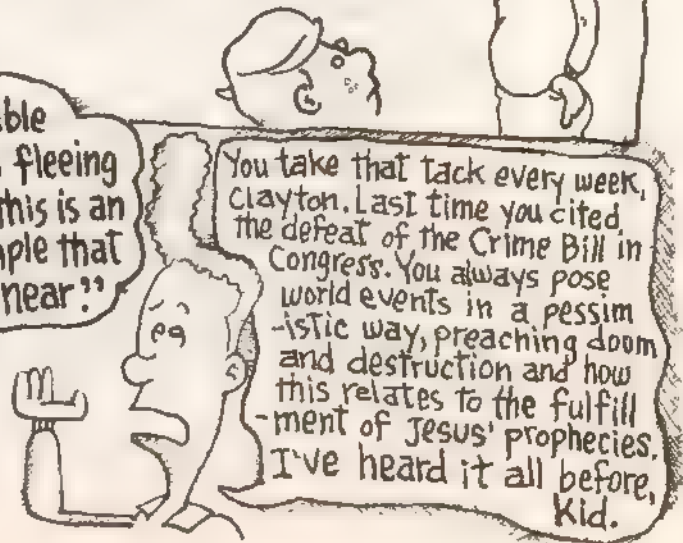
Gary decided to take the psychological initiative:

"Clayton, how nice to see you again. And how was your week?"

Unfazed, the boy launched into his spiel.

"Isn't it just terrible the Rwandan's fleeing their country? this is an excellent example that the end is near?"

You take that tack every week, Clayton. Last time you cited the defeat of the Crime Bill in Congress. You always pose world events in a pessimistic way, preaching doom and destruction and how this relates to the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies. I've heard it all before, Kid.



The child remained unaffected by this response, too.



"But the best part is, Mithter Dierly, Jesus said those who follow His Word will live forever in Paradise on Earth. Let me quote from the bible. Let's turn to Matthew 6:9 and 10."



Gary quickly put a hand out to stay the boy:

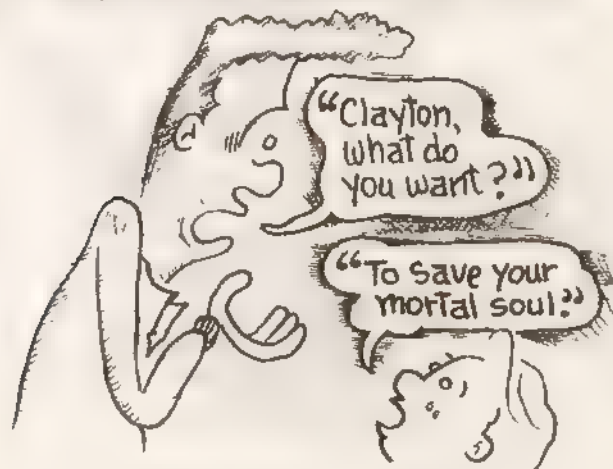
"No. Not this time, Clayton."



A Horrified expression spread across the child's face as if he had been unjustly spanked which made Gary feel uncomfortable.



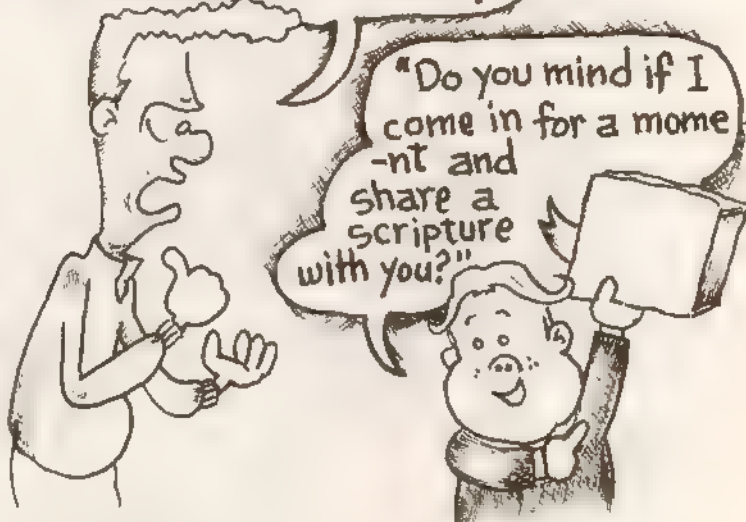
The sad countenance melted Gary Dierly. He attempted some straight talk:



"Clayton, what do you want?"

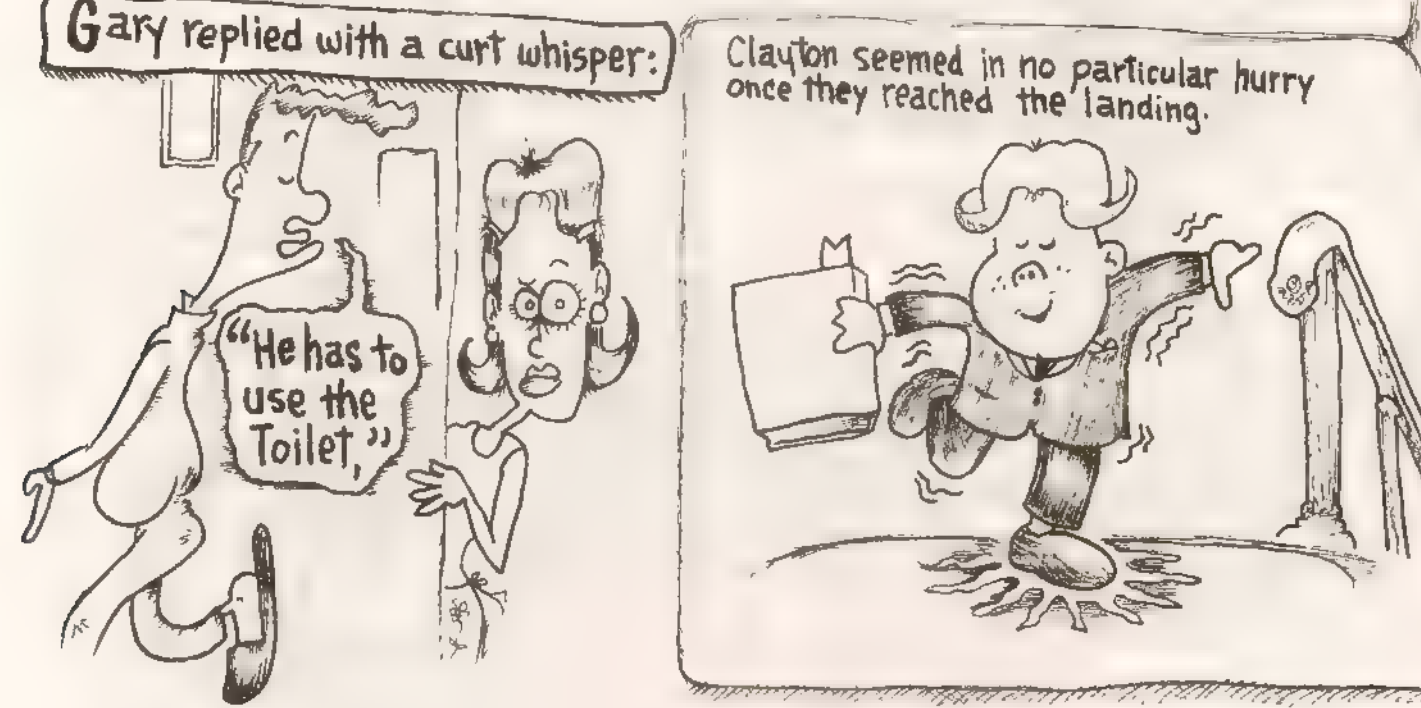
"To save your mortal soul?"

"But why me? why us? Can't you choose someone else to save?"



"Do you mind if I come in for a moment and share a scripture with you?"





He began a slow saunter around the ample foyer and stopped to admire a still life in its arabesque frame.



Gary and Darlene were so astounded that the boy seemed to take a personal pride in observing the decor and interior furnishings of their dwelling they at first failed to press him to go do his business.



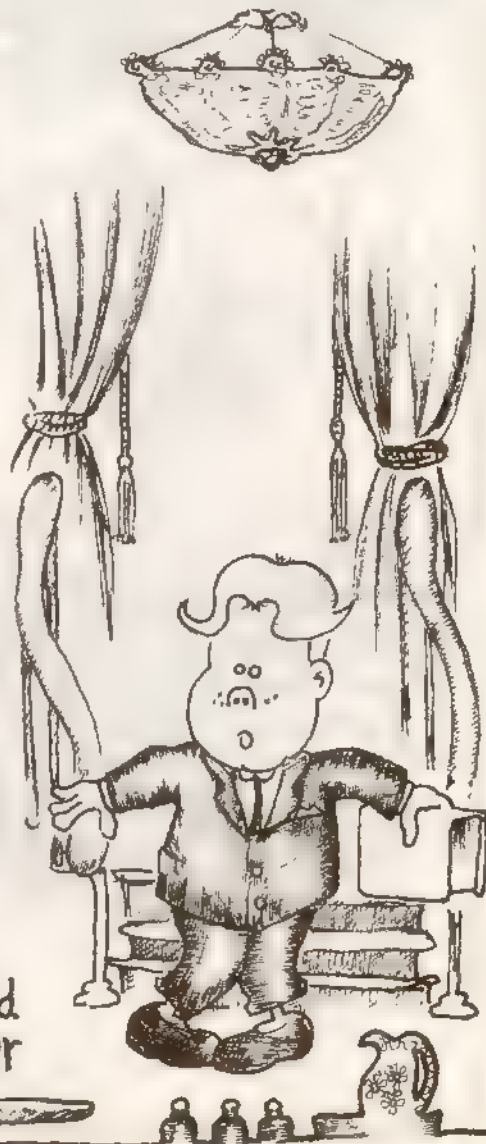
Although the boy knew his way around the house from having been invited up on several previous occasions he didn't make a direct approach to the bathroom.

Instead, he traipsed past

Darlene, who was still trying to make herself look small, as he wandered into the parlor.

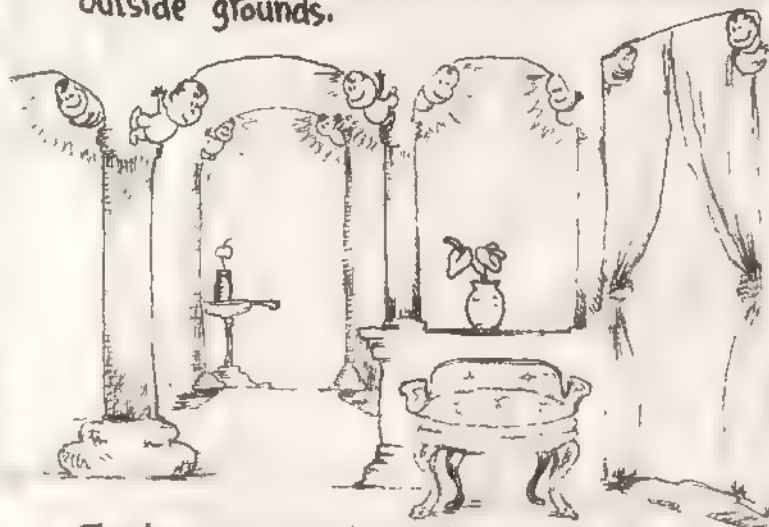


The room was light and cheery and, like the rest of the home, had been refurbished to capture all the Victorian charm its builder had initially invested in it.





The building had a spacious interior, nearly 3,000 square feet, with a separate entrance to what had once been the maid's quarters. It occupied two lots and Gary was responsible for the well-manicured outside grounds.

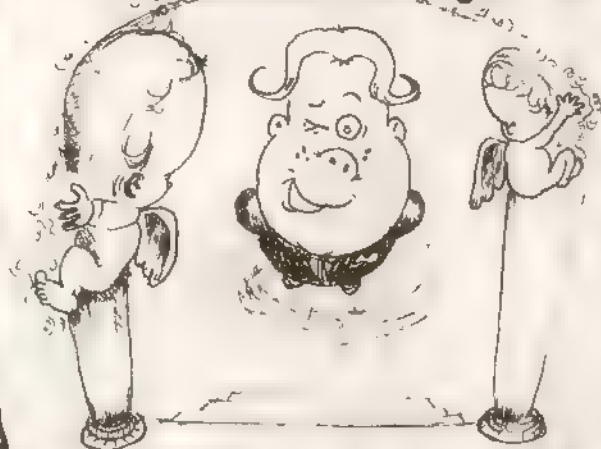


Smiling cherub plaster heads protruded from the

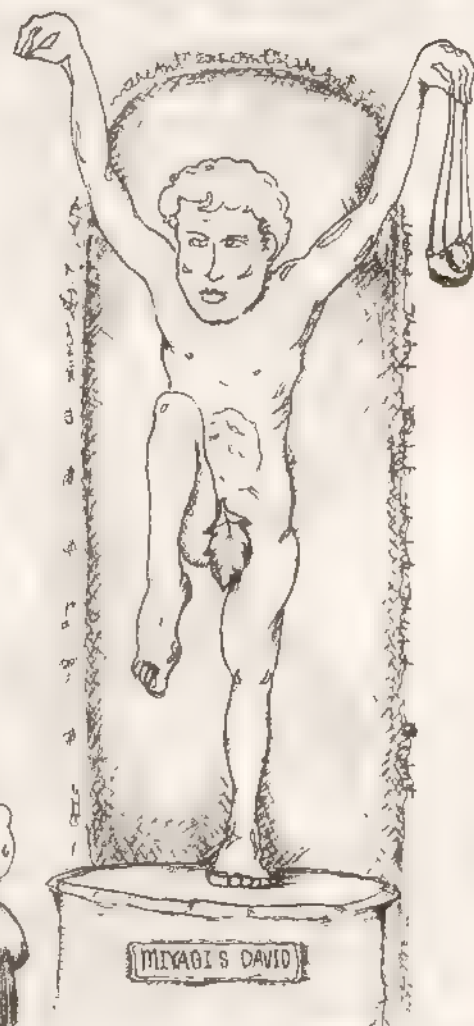


cornices of the archways in many rooms and half a dozen miniature angelic faces surrounded each ceiling rosette which had once harbored a gas flame but had been converted to electricity some time earlier in the century.

Gary was certain he saw the boy wink at one of the angels.

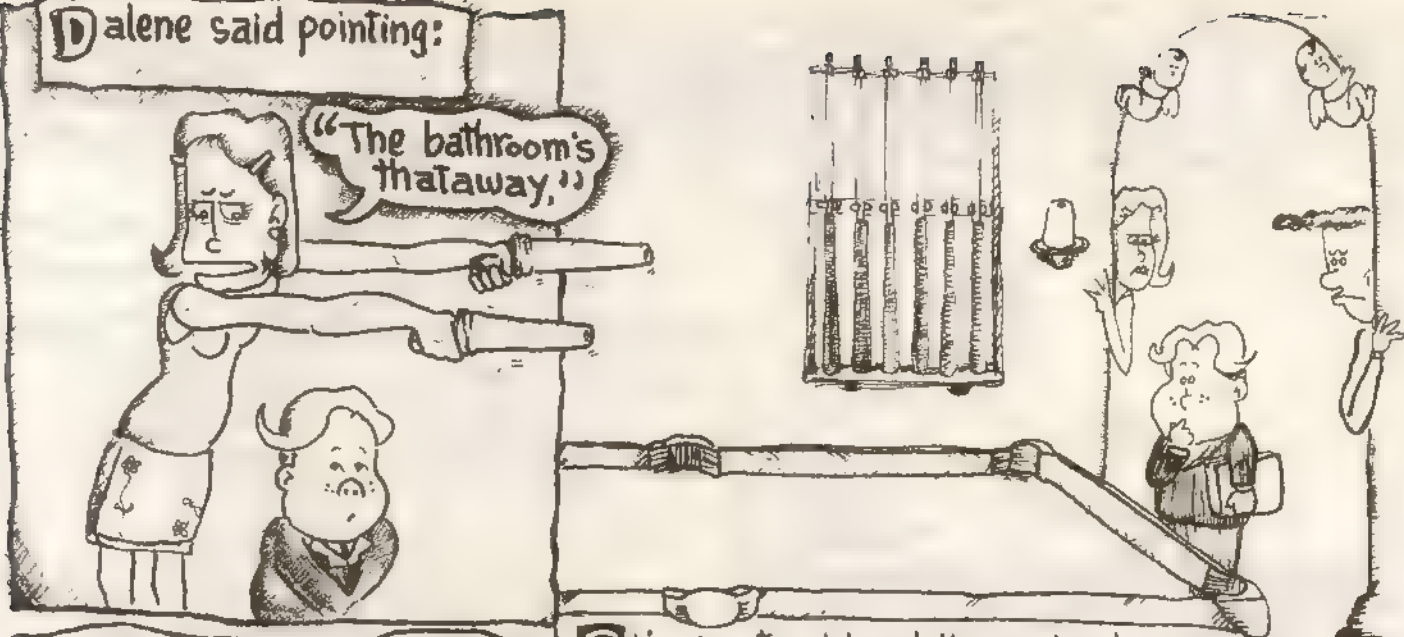


Clayton proceeded into the living room and stood beneath an alabaster figurine, an elaborate ceiling-to-wall ornament that had been one of many reasons the Dierly's had made an offer on the property almost immediately after their real estate agent had shown it to them.

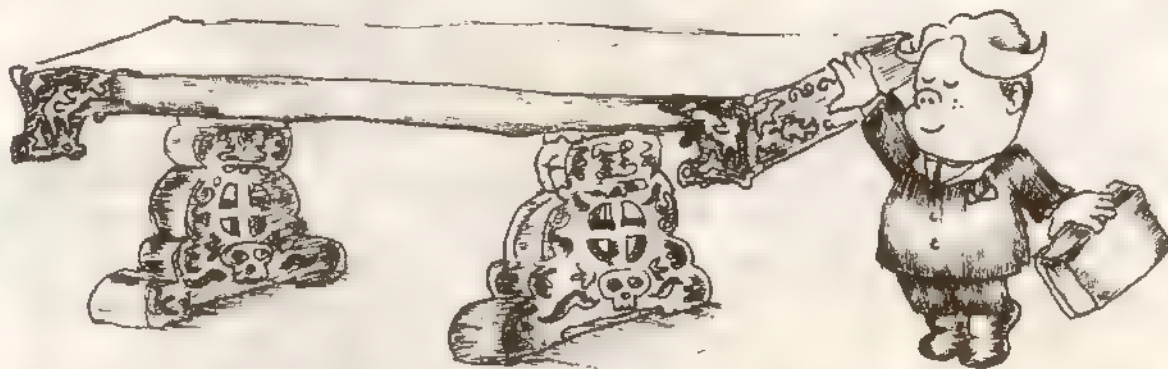


**D**alene said pointing:

"The bathroom's  
that away,"



**S**till Clayton delayed. He wandered into the room adjoining the parlor where Gary's most prized possession, a regulation size snooker table, squatted. There he stood oblivious to the Dierly's' silent pleas for him to get moving and held his breath for a moment.



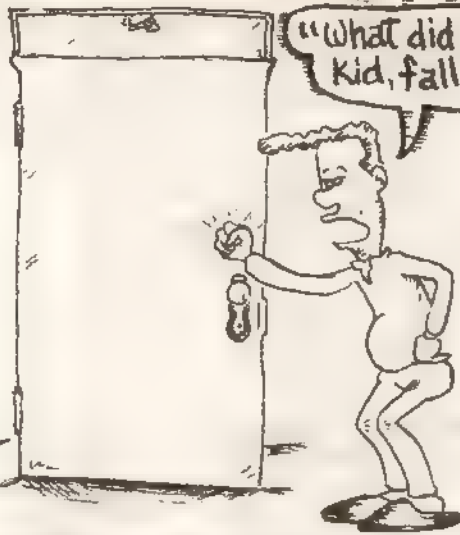
**T**hen he back-tracked through the parlor into the dining room and stood beside the massive oak dinner table as if imagining he had partaken of many elegant meals served there. He didn't seem inclined to either relieve himself or start preaching, although in the past he had exhorted them to begin a bible study class while standing on that very spot.

"Chop"  
"Chop"



**G**ary finally had to get behind the child and guide him. Ushered toward the facilities, Clayton had no choice but to take them up on their hospitality.





"What did you do, kid, fall in?"

The door closed behind him. He remained in the privacy of the bathroom for what seemed an inordinately long time. After five minutes, Gary went up and knocked briskly.

'chop' 'chop'

'chop' 'chop'



When at last they heard a flush and several long minutes later he came out, they gave Clayton no chance to either talk or take his leisurely time getting to the front door. They walked in tight formation right behind him the entire way.



As soon as he was gone, Darlene got off one of her cattiest remarks.

"Christ, you'd almost expect him to have tattoos on his knuckles saying **LOVE** and **HATE**."



Clayton looked back several times as he marched the half block down the street...

He found his parents and younger sister standing in front of a corner grocery holding copies of The Watcher and Rude Awakenings waist high in front of them.

His father barely seemed to notice his arrival although his mother peacefully took his hand in hers, then pressed a pamphlet into it for him to offer passersby.

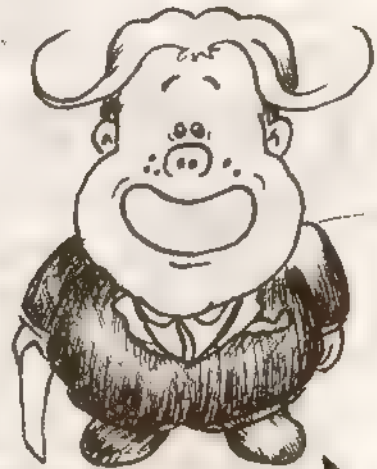


His father eventually asked:



"Where have you been all this time, son?"

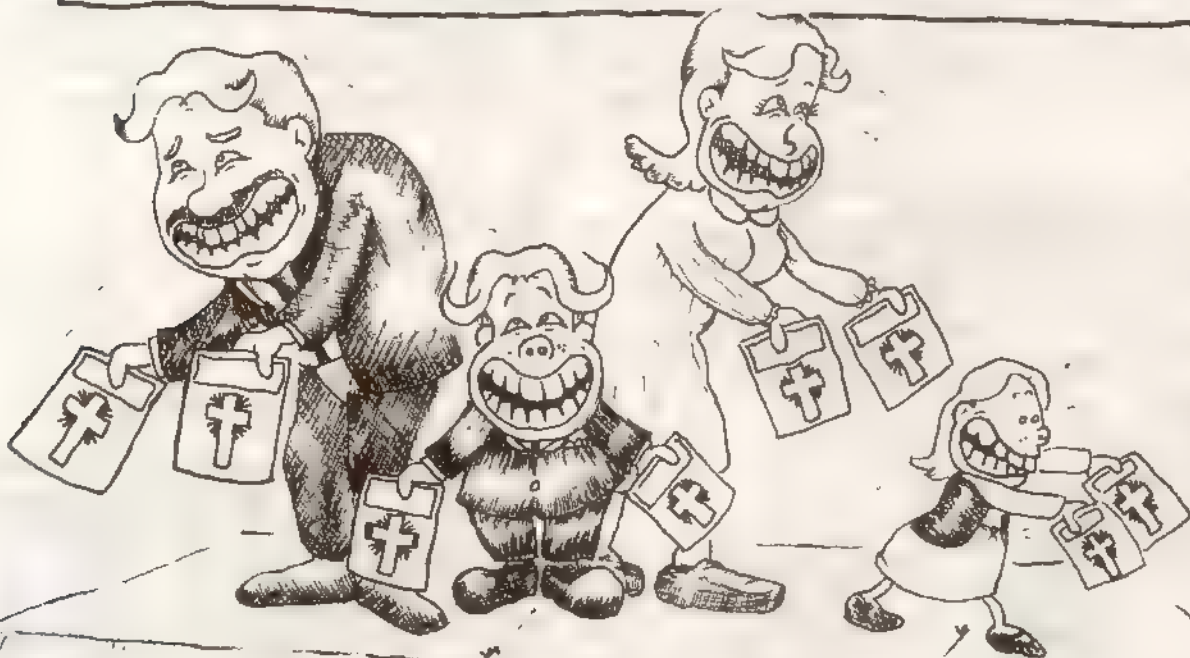
"out in service, father,"



"fulfilling my duty to the Lord"



Nothing more was said as the family stood with smiles on their faces and attempted to give away their publications.



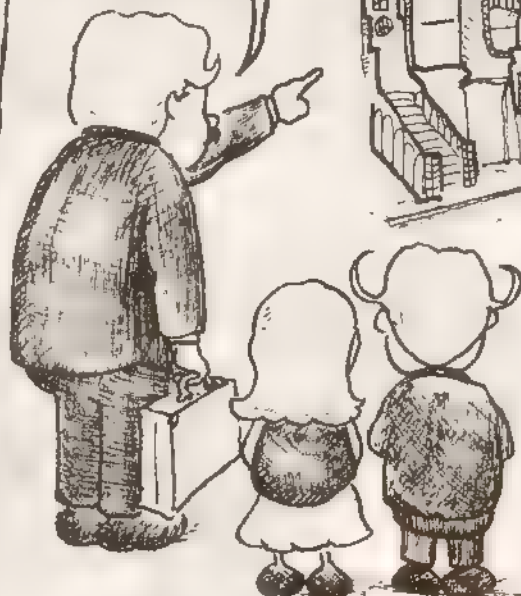
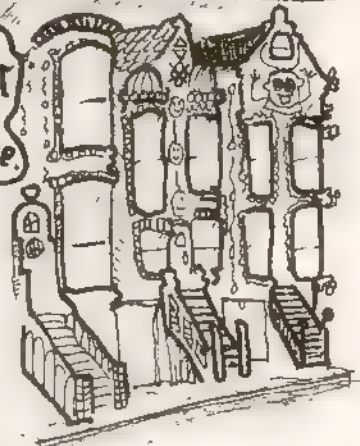
Some moments later as he began packing his briefcase, his father said:

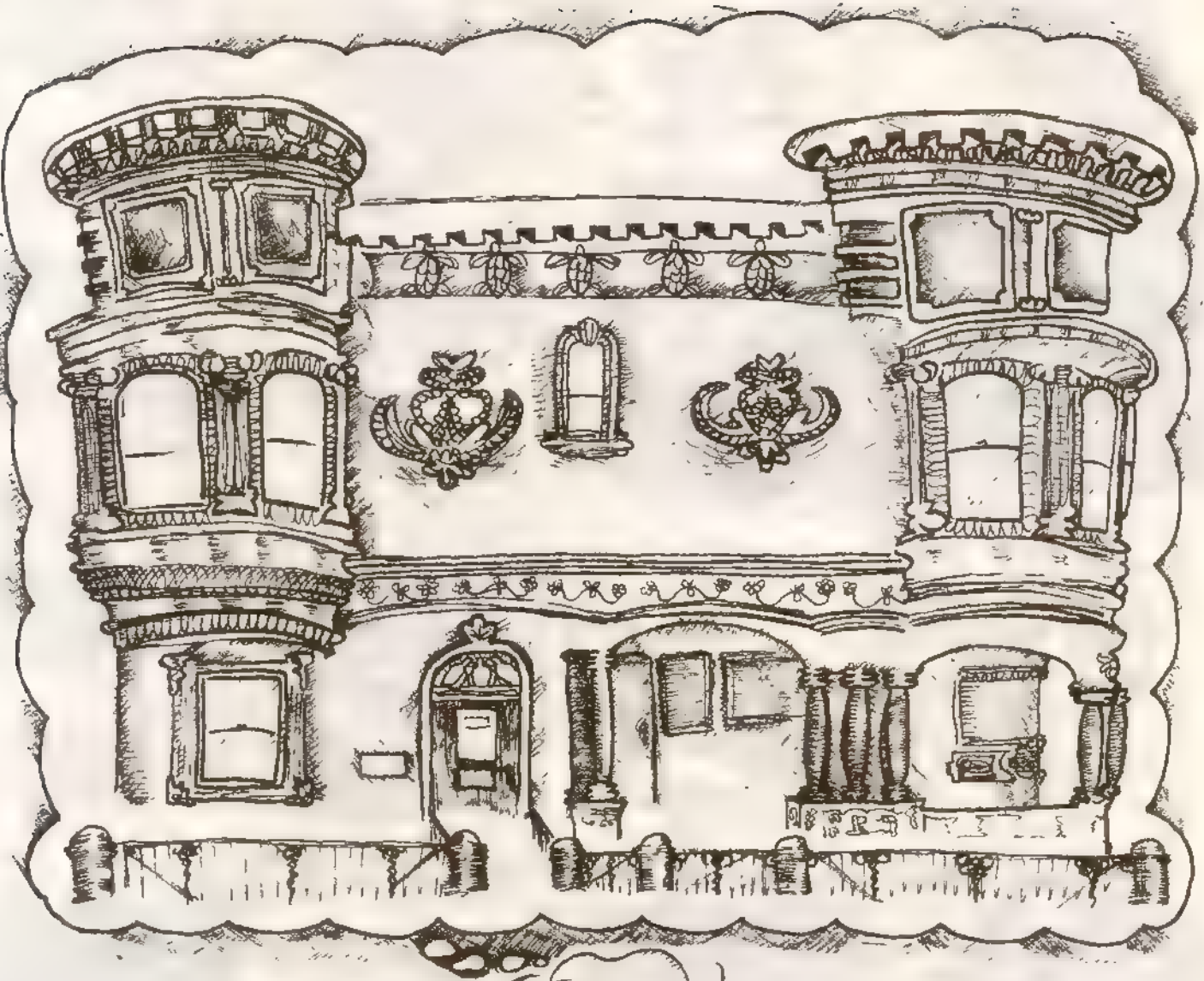


"Forget not  
The Lord's promise,  
children,  
The meek shall  
inherit. When  
the New Order  
comes, if these  
people haven't  
accepted God's  
word they're  
gonna die and  
not going to be  
here any more..."

He pointed to one of the many Victorians that lined the block and asked them all to admire it.

"...and we can come  
back and live in that  
beautiful house, or  
that one over there.  
Or that one."





But Clayton was silent. He knew there was really only one worth occupying when the New Order arrived.....

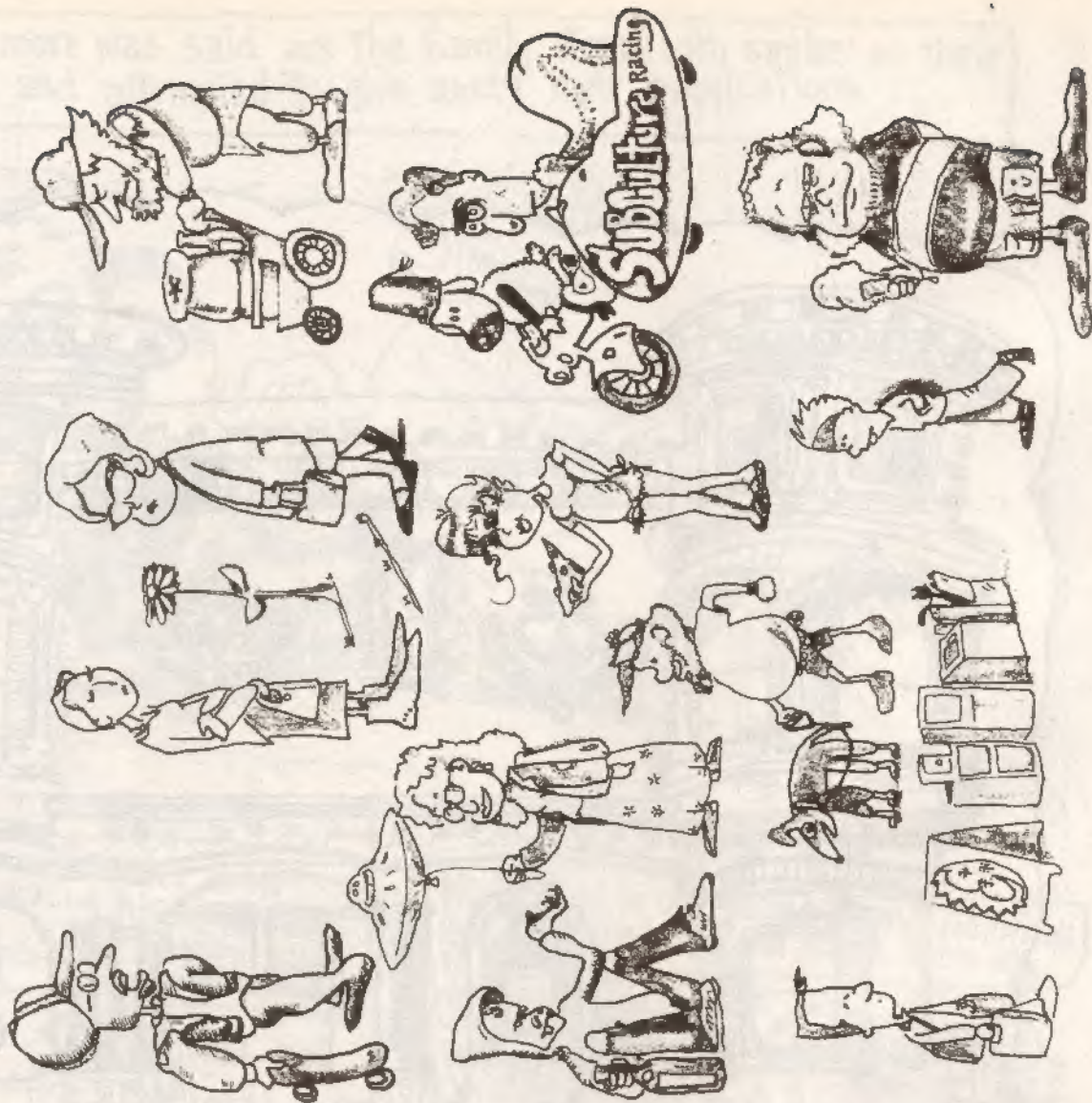


and he already had it picked out.

end



# A DAY in the Life of HAIGHT Sunday MARCH 25, 2001 5:00pm Perfect SUNLIGHT



## The Authors

The Ant was born in Okinawa in 1961. Ant is NOT his real name, he claims Okinawa is NOT Japan and that's NOT his real year of birth. He has resided in San Francisco since 1980. After being briefly homeless, from 1993 to '95, Ant was inspired to create and market his own brand



of sick and twisted underground comix. On stage he practices a traditional Japanese art form called Kami Shibai. You may see him perform comedy at Brainwash and The Mock, two San Francisco venues.

Ant's image appears at least once in each of our stories and on the cover. Can you find him?

Harry W. Moss was born in Riverside, CA, on August 4, 1947, darn near one of the first Baby Boomers. Graduated Long Beach State, B. A. English Literature, 1970; M. B. A. San Francisco State, 1988. He successfully avoided marriage and the military.

Over the course of his writing career Moss has sold more than 300 pieces of journalism to daily papers, such as the L.A. Times and the Boston Globe, monthlies, including Thrasher Magazine, and his twice monthly real estate column appeared for more than ten years in The Inter-City Express. He has written five complete novels and numerous short stories. All of them are in search of a publisher.

Moss wants the reader to know that each of the Haight Street stories has a basis in truth: They happened to someone he knows. One was told to him by a former girlfriend, another by the son of an old friend in Olympia, WA, and the last by a loan broker one evening over a beer in a bar on Union Street that is long since closed.



For example, he is pictured three times in "Esther."

Photos of Ant by H. W. Moss. Photo of Moss by Bob Sites





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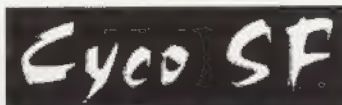
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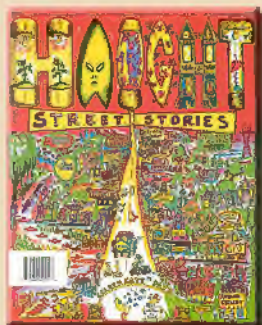


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- 43 - Ads
- 44 - City Optix (ad)

### **Artists:**

"Ant" - 1, 3, 4-41(a), 42  
Harry W. Moss - 4-41(s)

### **Comments:**

Okay, its not really an underground comix,  
but it should be.